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ERRANT ROMEO FACES PRISON FOR BILKING EIGHTH WIFE

LOS ANGELES

A man who financed an extravagant lifestyle with the money of middle-aged women he charmed and married, faces a three-year prison term after admitting he stole \$210,000 from his eighth wife.

Conrad Eugene Grohs Jr., 42, also known as Andrew J. Afar, pleaded guilty Wednesday to grand-theft charges before Municipal Court Judge Candace Cooper. Sentencing was set for July 30.

Grohs' eighth wife, a 47-year-old management consultant, had their three-month marriage annulled after learning in December he had taken \$210,000 from her bank accounts.

When arrested June 12 by Los Angeles police bunco detectives following a six-month investigation, Grohs was living aboard a yacht in Newport Beach with another woman.

His last wife said Grohs answered her personal ad in a singles newspaper last August. He described himself as a Kenny Rogers look-alike and promised a "storybook romance."

The woman, Arlene Magnus of Studio City, met Grohs at a Hollywood restaurant in September and the two were married four weeks later in New Mexico, a state that does not require proof-of-identity for marriage.

Court documents indicate Grohs told Magnus he was a former CIA agent, an author, a commercial pilot and doctoral candidate in psychology. He proposed several business ventures, to be funded by Magnus, she thought would make them rich.

Grohs allegedly spent \$50,000 on one venture, a hot-air balloon ride business. He also spent \$30,000 on furs and jewelry, court documents indicated.

Magnus became suspicious, however, and in December discovered her accounts had been depleted. She confronted Grohs and after receiving a letter from him in which he admitted his actions, she went to police.

The investigation found Grohs' seventh wife, a San Francisco woman, had their three-month marriage annulled after he allegedly stole \$85,000 from her.

Grohs, who married the woman under the name Andrew Afar, was not charged in that case.

He is also accused of stealing \$15,000 from three other San Francisco Bay Area women.

Detective Sgt. Robert Cameron said Grohs is neither a former CIA agent nor a doctoral candidate, but does have a commercial pilot's license.

Cameron said Grohs was arrested after a lieutenant with the University of California, Irvine, police discovered an arrest warrant had been issued for Grohs, who had started dating a friend of the officer.